

Doxorubicin

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Pronunciation

↶ (doks oh ROO bi sin)

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Brand Names

Adriamycin PFS™; Adriamycin RDF®; Rubex®

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Therapeutic Categories

Antineoplastic Agent, Antibiotic

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What key warnings should I know about before taking this medicine?

- This medicine may cause damage to your heart during or after treatment. The risk increases above a certain dose, with radiation to the chest area, with cyclophosphamide use, or if you have a history of heart disease. Children are at a higher risk of heart damage later on in life. Patients with liver disease need a lower dose. This medicine can have severe effects on the bone marrow. The bone marrow may not be able to produce the cells found in the blood as well as it used to. This medicine may cause damage around the area it is given if it leaks out. This would occur if the I.V. were not working properly.

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Reasons not to take this medicine

- If you have an allergy to doxorubicin or any other part of the medicine.
- If you have any of the following conditions: Severely weakened heart (congestive heart failure), cardiomyopathy, a history of poor bone marrow function causing low blood cell counts, or abnormal heartbeats called arrhythmias.
- If you have received a full treatment with doxorubicin, idarubicin, epirubicin, other anthracyclines, and/or daunorubicin.
- If you are pregnant.

RELATED INFORMATION

Interactions with herbs

- Evening Primrose
- Green Tea
- Milk Thistle
- Rosemary

Interactions with supplements

- Carnitine (L-Carnitine)
- Coenzyme Q10
- Cysteine
- Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)
- Glutamine
- Quercetin
- Selenium
- Vitamin A (Retinol)
- Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin K

What is this medicine used for?

- This medicine is a type of cancer chemotherapy for treating many different cancers.
- Doxorubicin may be used alone or in combination with other cancer medicines.

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How does it work?

- Doxorubicin kills rapidly growing cells like cancer cells.

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How is it best taken?

- It is given into the vein over 3-5 minutes, as a 15-60 minute infusion or as a 24-hour infusion. Mixing the doxorubicin with another liquid and giving it into the vein is a type of infusion.
- Doxorubicin is given in a clinic or hospital setting.
- Continue to drink lots of fluids unless told to drink less liquid by healthcare provider.
- Given into the abdominal cavity or the bladder as a wash in certain situations.

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What do I do if I miss a dose?

- This medicine is given on a specific schedule. It is important not to miss a dose unless recommended by your healthcare provider.
- Call and reschedule as soon as possible.

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What are the precautions when taking this medicine?

- Use caution if you have liver disease. Talk with healthcare provider.
- Tell healthcare provider if you have a weakened heart called congestive heart failure.
- Avoid aspirin, aspirin-containing products, ibuprofen or like products, other blood thinners (warfarin, ticlopidine, clopidogrel), garlic, ginseng, ginkgo, vitamin E. Talk with healthcare provider if you are taking any of these products.
- You will bleed easily. Be careful. Avoid injury. Use soft toothbrush, electric razor.
- Tell dentists, surgeons, and other healthcare providers about this medicine.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you have received or are receiving radiation therapy.
- Use caution if you have liver, bile system, or gallbladder disease. Talk with healthcare provider.
- Be cautious about taking vaccinations while you are receiving this medicine.

Certain types of vaccinations may be dangerous. Talk with healthcare provider.

- Tell healthcare provider if you are allergic to any medicine. Make sure to tell about the allergy and how it affected you. This includes telling about rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, throat; or any other symptoms involved.
- If you are a sexually active man, protect your partner from pregnancy. Use birth control you can trust while taking this medicine.
- Do not use in pregnancy and do not get pregnant. Use birth control you can trust while taking this medicine.
- Do not use if you are breast-feeding.

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What are the common side effects of this medicine?

- Side effects may depend on the dose you receive, other treatments, the type of cancer you have, and your overall health before getting cancer.
- Risk of infection. Avoid crowds and people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Nausea or vomiting. Small frequent meals, frequent mouth care, sucking hard candy, or chewing gum may help.
- Mouth and lip sores. Frequent mouth care with a soft toothbrush or cotton swabs and rinsing your mouth may help.
- Rarely, a weakened heart called congestive heart failure.
- Rarely, other forms of cancer may occur later in life.
- Loss of hair. Normal hair growth should restart after medicine is stopped.
- Reddish urine for 1-2 days after getting medicine.
- Facial flushing.

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What should I monitor?

- Temperature. Call healthcare provider if you have a fever.
- Check blood work. Talk with healthcare provider.
- Nutrition. Try to eat as well as possible. Talk with nutritionist if necessary.
- Follow up with healthcare provider.

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Reasons to call healthcare provider immediately

- Signs of a life-threatening reaction. These include wheezing; tightness in the chest; fever; itching; bad cough; blue skin color; fits; swelling of face, lips, tongue, throat.
- Redness, swelling, pain, tenderness, or pus where medicine is given.
- Signs and symptoms of infection.
- Unusual bleeding or bruising.
- Shortness of breath, decreased ability to walk or exercise, swelling of feet and lower legs or fast heartbeat.
- Severe nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Unusual tiredness or weakness.

- Lightheadedness or fainting.
- Any rash.

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How should I store this medicine?

- This medicine will be given in a clinic or hospital setting. You will not store it at home.

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General statements

- Do not share your medicine with others and do not take anyone else's medicine.
- Keep all medicine out of the reach of children and pets.
- Keep a list of all your medicines (prescription, herbal/supplements, vitamins, over-the-counter) with you. Give this list to healthcare provider (doctor, nurse, pharmacist, physician assistant).
- Talk with healthcare provider before starting any new medicine, including over-the-counter or natural products (herbs, vitamins).

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